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General and complete disarmament

Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	2
II. Replies received from Governments	2
Chile	2
Cuba	4
Germany	7
Latvia	7
Lebanon	8
Portugal	8
Spain	9
Ukraine	10

* A/70/150.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 69/46, the General Assembly reaffirmed the ways and means regarding confidence- and security-building measures set out in the report of the Disarmament Commission on its 1993 session, and it called upon Member States to pursue those ways and means through sustained consultations and dialogue, while at the same time avoiding actions that might hinder or impair such a dialogue. Furthermore, the Assembly urged States to comply strictly with all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including arms control and disarmament agreements, to which they are a party. The Assembly emphasized that the objective of confidence-building measures should be to help to strengthen international peace and security and to be consistent with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and encouraged the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures, with the consent and participation of the parties concerned, to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its seventieth session containing the views of Member States on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. A note verbale was sent on 9 February 2015 to all Member States requesting their views. The replies received at the time of reporting are contained in section II. Any additional replies will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Chile

[Original: Spanish]
[29 May 2015]

Regional context

- (a) Organization of American States (OAS), annual report on:
 - (i) Notification of imports and exports, submitted pursuant to the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions (resolution AG/RES. 1284 (XXIV-O/94));
 - (ii) Transfer of small arms and light weapons (resolution AG/RES. 1284 (XXIV-O/94));
 - (iii) Military expenditure in standardized and simplified format (resolution AG/RES. 1284 (XXIV-O/94)).
- (b) Union of South American Nations (UNASUR):
 - (i) Annual report on:
 - Organization, functions and procedures of Ministries of Defence
 - Data on military forces: troops, weapons and equipment
 - Register of transfers and acquisitions of conventional weapons and equipment in accordance with United Nations standardized reporting

- Register of the full texts of intraregional and extraregional cooperation agreements on defence and security
 - Defence expenditure
 - National defence budget in all its stages
 - National systems for marking and tracing weapons
- (ii) Requests for clarification on defence issues;
- (iii) Notice of military manoeuvres, deployments or exercises in countries within or outside the region;
- (iv) Invitation to military observers from UNASUR countries to military exercises with countries within or outside the region;
- (v) Communication mechanism between border military forces to coordinate and announce activities.

Subregional context

- (a) With Argentina:
- (i) Political consultations between the Ministers of Defence of Chile and Argentina;
 - (ii) Mechanism for 2+2 dialogue between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Defence;
 - (iii) Argentine-Chilean Permanent Committee on Security (COMPERSEG);
 - (iv) Combined Joint Peacekeeping Force "Cruz del Sur" and "Cruz del Sur" Exercise;
 - (v) Combined Joint Peacekeeping Force "Cruz del Sur" Bilateral Group for Political Dialogue, which meets in the context of COMPERSEG meetings;
 - (vi) Combined participation in peacekeeping operations in Cyprus;
 - (vii) "Solidarity" working-level exercise for natural disaster response;
 - (viii) Bilateral Working Group for Cooperation in Science, Technology and Production for Defence, which meets in the context of COMPERSEG meetings;
 - (ix) Ad hoc Working Group on Mining Matters in the Border Area.
- (b) With Peru: Defence and Security Committee.
- (c) With Brazil: Bilateral Defence Group.
- (d) With Colombia: Chile-Colombia Strategic Political Dialogue.
- (e) With Ecuador:
- (i) Bilateral Defence Group;
 - (ii) Joint Engineering Corps in Haiti, which consisted of engineers from the Chilean army and members of the engineering corps of the Ecuadorian army.
- (f) With Honduras:

- (i) Combined participation in peacekeeping operations in Haiti;
- (ii) Cooperation programme in Central America.
- (g) With El Salvador:
 - (i) Combined participation in peacekeeping operations in Haiti;
 - (ii) Cooperation programme in Central America;
 - (iii) Support from Chile for the preparation of the first Salvadorian defence white paper.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[23 March 2015]

Global, regional, subregional and national efforts are relevant and necessary to build confidence among States.

In this regard, confidence-building measures are of great value as a contribution to international peace and security.

Confidence-building is a step-by-step process that requires consensus among the participating States.

Cuba not only supports confidence-building measures at all levels, as appropriate and on a voluntary basis, but also considers it necessary to strengthen, improve and expand them because of their valuable contribution to the promotion of understanding, transparency and cooperation among States, as well as to the enhancement of stability and security and the facilitation of disarmament measures.

The adoption of confidence-building measures which fully respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and enjoy the consent and participation of the parties concerned can help to avoid conflict, prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities and contribute to regional stability and the achievement of development objectives, including the eradication of poverty and protection of the environment.

Because they are voluntary in nature, confidence-building measures cannot be imposed; nor are there any one-size-fits-all solutions. The success of such measures will depend to a large extent on achieving genuine consensus among the States participating in their implementation. They must be tailored to the geographical, political, social, cultural and economic conditions of each region.

Although the implementation of confidence-building measures can help to create an enabling environment for the implementation of disarmament commitments and their verification, such measures can in no way be a substitute for arms control and disarmament measures and existing regional and subregional treaties in that area, nor are they a precondition for their implementation.

The existence of more than 16,000 nuclear weapons, of which approximately 4,000 are in operational status, and the unjustifiably high levels of global military expenditure, which amounted to over \$1.75 trillion in 2013, are factors that create a climate of mistrust and legitimate international concern.

At least half of current military expenditure should be allocated to the establishment of a fund administered by the United Nations to meet the economic and social development requirements of countries in need.

Cuba welcomes the proclamation of the Latin American and Caribbean region as a zone of peace at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana on 28 and 29 January 2014, by means of which member States reaffirmed their commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, in order to banish forever the threat or use of force in our region.

In this context, Cuba highlights that States with greater military capabilities bear a major responsibility with regard to confidence-building measures.

To the extent possible, on the basis of consent and without any impact on the national security of the respective countries, measures should be taken to promote mutual understanding between the armed forces of the region and ensure greater transparency in all possible areas. States with more powerful armed forces should guarantee that they will not attack smaller countries.

The above will be possible to the extent that States consider that there is no danger of military attack, political pressure or economic coercion.

For the establishment of confidence-building measures in the military sphere, tensions in the region or subregion concerned must be reduced and cooperation must be enhanced so that any situation, however complicated it may be, can be resolved peacefully through negotiation. For example, in the area of border monitoring, an appropriate system of communication between contiguous States is needed in order to avoid possible sources of conflict, taking into account the proximity of States and the confluence of ships, aircraft and other units in adjacent areas.

Under certain conditions of reduced tension, and on a voluntary basis, the implementation of measures such as the following could be considered:

- (a) Provide advance notice of all exercises and manoeuvres that take place in the region, especially those involving the movement of forces and equipment by sea and by air in areas close to other countries;
- (b) Adopt measures for the gradual reduction of forces and equipment involved in such exercises; reduce live-fire activities with long-range weapons systems that could hit unintended targets at sea, on land or in the air;
- (c) Provide notification of airspace and sea space reservations for the purposes of such exercises or other military activities. Such notification should take place through the established channels and reach all interested parties sufficiently in advance;
- (d) At the time of approval of exercises and manoeuvres of a certain scale, explain their objectives, the tactical and operational issues involved and the numbers of forces participating;
- (e) When possible, invite military representatives from the countries in the region to participate as observers in some events or manoeuvres forming part of these exercises;
- (f) Conduct the combat training activities of the armed forces at a prudent distance from the coasts or borders of other countries, unless the latter are

participating in those activities or give their prior consent to the party conducting them. Particularly important are aviation activities in areas close to other countries, which are a significant risk;

(g) Reach agreements to ban exercises and manoeuvres in areas where there are intensive commercial, fishing, tourism, scientific research or other activities;

(h) Provide advance notice of the use of warships (especially aircraft carriers and amphibious units) in areas close to other countries, in groups or in isolation;

(i) Establish an advanced notification system for when units of this type cross passages or straits where there is intense traffic, including the Yucatan Canal, the Florida Straits and the Windward Passage;

(j) Establish limits in specific areas for the presence of nuclear-powered ships, as well as more severe restrictions for ships and aircraft with the capacity to carry nuclear arms;

(k) Install hotlines between Governments and military commanders of the countries of the region, so that any urgent situation that arises can be resolved in a timely manner;

(l) Organize bilateral and multilateral contacts and events on a regular basis for specialized personnel in order to improve relations between military forces in the area and to create a climate of mutual confidence in the military sphere;

(m) Particularly important would be issues relating to military bases of other countries in the region. Initial measures could be taken on the status of such facilities. Those facilities that are present against the will of Governments and peoples in the area, and that infringe the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation where they are situated, among other factors, should be withdrawn.

The implementation of confidence-building measures should take place in such a manner as to ensure the right of each State to undiminished security, guaranteeing that no individual State or group of States obtains advantages over others at any stage of the confidence-building process.

Respect for international law, compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and international treaties, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the sovereign equality of States, respect for the sovereignty of States, non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs, renunciation of the threat or use of force, cooperation among States in solving international and regional problems, respect for the self-determination of peoples, and fulfilment in good faith of obligations assumed are the basis of peaceful coexistence and international security and constitute the indispensable framework for the development of truly effective confidence-building measures.

Our country recognizes the importance of efforts to reduce possible political or military tensions, conflicts or confrontations and establish stable relations of cooperation in all spheres of international relations.

Confidence-building measures should contribute to the establishment of favourable conditions for the peaceful settlement of disputes and existing international problems and for the enhancement and promotion of international relations based on justice, cooperation and solidarity.

Germany

[Original: English]

[29 May 2015]

The Federal Republic of Germany, referring to its contribution of 2014 to the database on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms (in relation to resolution 69/64), attaches great significance to confidence-building measures in disarmament and arms control, and emphasizes the importance of such measures at the regional and subregional levels.

Germany is a party to or has participated in the following treaties, agreements and activities relating to confidence-building measures, at the regional and subregional levels:

- (a) The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe;
- (b) The Treaty on Open Skies;
- (c) The Vienna Document;
- (d) The Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE);
- (e) The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dayton Peace Accords), annex 1B;
- (f) The OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons;
- (g) The OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition;
- (h) The OSCE Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers.

Latvia

[Original: English]

[15 June 2015]

Latvia is fully committed to confidence-building measures in the regional and broader European context. Those measures, when fully implemented, contribute to transparency and predictability, and therefore help to build trust among States. In order to promote those principles, Latvia has joined and vigorously implements relevant arms control instruments, including on a bilateral basis, and has proposed regional confidence-building measures regarding military air and maritime activities in the region. Latvia considers that bilateral and multilateral measures are mutually reinforcing and that their synergy can be utilized to create conditions for transparent and predictable relations among States.

In 2014, Latvia, together with Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, presented a statement on military maritime and air traffic to the First Committee of the General Assembly. The statement proposed concrete confidence-building measures, such as making use of on-board transponders and advance sharing of route plans when military activity is taking place in the exclusive economic zone of another country or in the international airspace in immediate proximity to the borders of other countries. Latvia believes that such measures could improve transparency and the overall climate of trust between States, in particular in the Baltic Sea region.

Latvia has adopted the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and signed the Treaty on Open Skies, which establishes a regime of unarmed observation flights over the territories of the States parties. In 2004, Latvia signed a bilateral agreement with Belarus, in accordance with chapter X of the Vienna Document 1999. That agreement provides opportunity for both parties to conduct annually an additional arms control inspection and evaluation visit. In addition, the bilateral agreement sets out transparency measures regarding military exercises and establishes a format for expert consultations on arms control issues. Since its adoption, the bilateral agreement has been implemented in a responsible and cooperative manner by both parties.

While recognizing that the effectiveness of confidence-building measures largely depends on the political will of States, Latvia remains interested in engaging in further measures both on a bilateral and multilateral basis. Latvia will continue to promote the development and the implementation of best practices in the fields of maritime and air traffic. Latvia also supports the efforts to modernize the existing arms control instruments and has proposed signing another bilateral agreement under the Vienna Document.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[1 April 2015]

The Ministry of National Defence wishes to state that Lebanon supports all international initiatives and conventions aimed at building confidence, preserving the military balance and combating the untrammelled proliferation of various forms of weapons in the region and the world. That trend poses a serious threat at the regional, subregional and national levels. Lebanon is committed to international law and the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the equal sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. The main obstacle facing Lebanon with regard to confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context is Israel, which has continued to violate international laws and norms and possesses weapons of mass destruction that pose a constant threat at the local and regional levels.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[20 April 2015]

At its sixty-ninth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context, recalling the resolutions and guidelines adopted by consensus by the Assembly and the Disarmament Commission relating to confidence-building measures, urged States to comply strictly with all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including arms control and disarmament agreements, to which they are party.

Portugal considers that confidence-building measures are a key element in improving and reinforcing peace and security, a major input for regional stability and an important way to prevent conflicts, at the international, regional and subregional levels.

In that context, Portugal publishes an annual report on international trade in and the intermediation of defence equipment. Portugal also collects national data on the export of conventional weapons, which it submits to the European Union in its annual report, and reports to the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Wassenaar Arrangement. In 2014, Portugal was among the first 50 countries to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, and it plays an active part in the promotion of its universalization. Portugal also reports on confidence-building measures in the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

Portugal publishes annually its military budget, which is available to non-governmental organizations and think tanks, and fully cooperates with the requests that are presented in relation to it.

Furthermore, with regard to the export of weapons, Portugal implements a strict national legislation and fully complies with Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of the Council of the European Union, which sets forth common rules for all member States of the European Union. Those rules include the respect for international and regional embargoes, regional stability and, especially, human rights.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[29 May 2015]

The ultimate goal of any system of arms control or confidence- and security-building measures should be to prevent conflict by reducing the dangers of misunderstanding or miscalculation with regard to the military activities of other countries, taking steps to impede covert military preparations, reducing the risk of surprise attacks, and reducing the risk of the outbreak of war by accident.

From that perspective, confidence- and security-building measures within a regional or subregional context are of great value as a form of prevention specifically adapted to that context, given that they involve a smaller number of parties and can therefore be more stringent, tailored to the local situation, and, thus, more effective. All of the foregoing makes such measures easier to adopt and implement.

Within its own regional sphere, Spain has actively participated in all relevant initiatives; it is a party to the Treaty on Open Skies and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which include a number of legally binding measures. Moreover, as a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), it is politically bound by the measures contained in the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (which was updated in 2011 with the aim of improving and broadening its implementation), as well as by other OSCE documents. Moreover, Spain has contributed to the implementation of the Agreement on Regional Stabilization established by annex I-B to the Dayton Agreement regarding the former Yugoslavia.

Ukraine

[Original: English]
[28 May 2015]

Ukraine fully shares the vision of the General Assembly in its resolution 69/46 of 2 December 2014 and recognizes the importance of the role and objectives of the confidence-building measures laid down therein.

Ukraine remains consistently committed to the objectives of strengthening security for all, including through effective confidence- and security-building measures. Therefore, Ukraine supports all pan-European, subregional and complementary bilateral confidence- and security-building measures, whether past, present or future, and advocates expanding the scope of their application. In the light of the aggression that has unexpectedly become possible even in a conciliated Europe, it also favours tightening the coercive and obligatory level of those measures to preclude any repeat of what has happened to Ukraine.

The still not eradicated possibility of aggression, while raising concerns over the effectiveness of confidence- and security-building measures, also underscores the potential value of such measures when countries comply with their commitments and obligations and implement them fully and in good faith. In particular, the crisis in and around Ukraine is yet another reminder of the urgent need to improve those measures in order to strengthen them, so that they better address the existing security issues in their areas of application.

The aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine stresses the advisability of taking into account, during the design or improvement of those measures, such tasks as lowering the thresholds for notification, increasing opportunities for verification activities, expanding the range of military activities subject to notification, modernizing and updating the exchange of military information, strengthening the risk reduction mechanisms and considering possibilities to enlarge the scope of the measures. Those are tasks requiring a responsible approach, which should take into account cost-effectiveness and the further improvement of the overall level of implementation.

The example of the aggression by the Russian Federation, which has challenged the very essence of trust and confidence embodied in the confidence- and security-building measures, also compels us to a periodic assessment of the relevance, strengths and weaknesses of the politico-military instruments used by participating States.

Ukraine has been a long-standing responsible party to such pan-European, subregional and complementary bilateral confidence-building mechanisms, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, and an active participant in their modernization. Additionally, Ukraine has had very positive experiences of deepening confidence-building through the use of separate bilateral intergovernmental agreements on confidence- and security-building measures in border areas, as encouraged in the Vienna Document. Ukraine entered into such agreements with neighbouring Poland in 2004, Hungary in 1998, Slovakia and Belarus in 2001 and Romania in 2015. Regular inspection activities and meetings of the parties to those agreements are aimed not so much at compliance verification, but mostly at the enhancement of military contacts and mutual relations

in the interest of incrementally strengthening and complementing a bilateral, subregional and European confidence- and security-building process. Regrettably, the numerous proposals made in the past by Ukraine to enter into similar agreements with the Russian Federation were rejected by the Russian side under the pretext of a strategic partnership between the two countries, whose true nature was entirely revealed by the aggression by the Russian Federation. Also, regrettably, the unacceptable behaviour of the Russian Federation has undermined the viability of such regional confidence-building arrangements among the littoral States of the Black Sea, such as the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group and confidence- and security-building measures in the naval field.

Ukraine is confident that the strong commitment of all participating States to fully implementing and further improving and extending confidence- and security-building measures is essential for enhancing military and political stability within the respective regions. It is, however, a great challenge to ensure that the contracted obligations are respected even by non-democratic regimes.

Ukraine believes that the European experience with confidence- and security-building measures may rightly be regarded as a success story and that the Vienna Document, which has generated a great deal of experience in the field of trust- and confidence-building, can serve as a viable example for similar arrangements in other regions, as those measures could certainly benefit all parts of the world.